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LIVESTOCK INCREASE IN NORTHWEST CHINA IN 1952

These good results were due to the leadership of the party and government in arousing the people to participate in a patriotic movement for increasing the number of animals, this object being attained by better control of pasture, prevention of epidemics, and improvement of the stock.

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Much has been done in the way of organization. Statistics show that 7,241 village animal husbandry groups were formed during 1952 in the four provinces of Shensi, Kansu, Ningsia, and Tsinghai. In the grazing area, emphasis was given to the establishment of many groups to control the grazing land. Other groups were formed to prevent epidemics, to drive off predatory animals, and to give mutual aid in shepherding.

The grazing land was used according to a definite plan. In a People's Autonomous Region [type of nationality not stated] of northern Kansu the people allocated for pasture four areas totaling 13,100 square Chinese li [one linear li is one third of a mile]; while in Ningsia Province, in nine hsien and one banner, 86 plots, with a total area of 10,885 square Chinese li, were allocated for grazing. In some areas grazing was prohibited for a time. By these means pasturage improved and the stock had plenty to eat and suffered less from parasites.

Where water was scarce the people dug wells, repaired ditches, cleared out springs, and scooped out water holes. In Ningsia Province alone, 591 wells and 712 earth reservoirs were dug.

Everywhere people increased the storage of fodder for winter feeding. In most localities the people included the procuring of hay as one of the patriotic duties they swore to carry out for the government. In the whole Northwest the amount of hay stored showed an increase of 65 percent over 1951. The area where storage is practiced increased 230 percent.

In some cases better protection was given for the stock. In Tsinghai Province, in T'ung-jen Hsien, the people dug out many caves to provide shelter from the cold for lambs, thus increasing the number of lambs to survive.

Better housing for men and beasts was also provided. In Ningsia Province, in the interest of good health, the authorities advocated separate housing for men and beasts. Sheds were built for the animals, using old wood and discarded bricks. When necessary, the government helped with loans. In all, 18,366 sheds were repaired or built and 28,505 households were thus enabled to dispense with having animals in their homes.

Steps were taken to lessen losses from wolves and other wild animals. Ningsia Province organized 280 wolf-killing teams which managed to slay 942 wolves and 59 panthers. The women and some lamas of A La-shan Banner also took part in such hunts. In Sinkiang Province in such places as Urumchi, Sharasume, Ch'ang-chi, Khotan, and T'ao-li the shepherds had killed 666 wolves by the end of October 1952.

Improvement of stock constituted another mark of progress. Cross-breeding of the Lan-ha sheep was undertaken to improve the native stock. The original aim was to breed 100,000 sheep but they succeeded in breeding 129,000 with 95 percent fertility. In the case of horses, Soviet Karabair stallions were bred to native mares. For the general improvement of stock, people were instructed to have male animals of good strain available for general use while inferior males were to be made sterile. In Ningsia Province, following these instructions, 39,000 male goats and rams and 14,366 other male animals were castrated.

When animal epidemics occurred people were alerted to quarantine the diseased animals, to disinfect them, to control the disposal of carcasses, and to inoculate other animals against the disease. The incidence of animal disease has lessened, and the mortality rate has been lowered to a marked degree. For example, in Ningsia Province in 1951, the animal mortality rate was 6.4 percent, but in 1952 it had fallen to 1.81 percent.

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In some sections of the northwest the patriotic movement for increasing the number of animals revealed many shortcomings. Some organizations existed in form only. Only lip service was paid to control of the grazing land. In such matters as provision for winter fodder and for Chinese veterinary work, arrangements were not complete. In such localities, the correction of these conditions must be stressed.

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